

2001 MILFORD RESERVOIR FISHING FORECAST

WALLEYE--Good. Fall netting results indicate the density of walleye increased 42% over last year, and is now at its highest level since 1985. Year classes were well represented throughout the sample, with the 2000 class only slightly below average. Walleye over 20 inches in length have increased 46% over last year, and are the most abundant since 1992. Walleye over 25 inches are also at their greatest density since 1992, and increased 100% over last year. If reservoir inflows do not necessitate high water releases resulting in the loss of fish, walleye fishing in 2001 should be the best in recent years. (18" length limit)

WIPER--Fair. Wipers were sampled at their lowest density since 1993. Reduced stockings over the last 5 years, including 2 years of no stockings, have adversely impacted this population to a great extent. Wipers larger than 25 inches, however, were sampled for the first time since 1995, and are present in good numbers. Although smaller fish will be less abundant, these larger wipers will provide anglers with the chance to catch multiple trophies. (Creel limit 2)

CRAPPIE--Good. Crappie density has increased to its highest level since 1995. This density is 20% over the reservoirs historic crappie abundance. In addition, the 2000 crappie spawn produced the best year class on record. Overall size of crappie, however, has declined. Winter angling harvest has been relatively light thus far, so spring weather should bring good numbers of crappie under 12 inches to the bank.

WHITE BASS—Very Good. White bass numbers have again increased, this time 54% higher than last year's abundance. White bass densities are the greatest since >96, which was the highest recorded for the reservoir. Current year abundance is the third highest sampled in the reservoir history. 28% of white bass sampled were longer than 12 inches, a 22% increase over last year. White bass over 15 inches long were also sampled for the first time since 1997. Furthermore, good numbers of smaller fish were also present. 2001 should be a bountiful year for white bass angling at Milford Reservoir.

CATFISH—Very Good. Channel catfish densities are similar to last year. Overall size, though, increased, with 56% of the sample larger than 16 inches. This is a 37% increase over the 1999 sample. Blue cats continue to reproduce, with 2 strong year classes entering the fishery. Anglers caught many blues of varying sizes last year. 12-20 inch blues should be abundant in 2001, with 20-30 inch fish available in good numbers, too. This species should continue to provide a unique and trophy fishery for years to come, and will only get better as reproduction continues. When the abundant flathead population is also factored in, catfishing in 2001 should provide many rod-bending experiences.

BLACK BASS--Good. Largemouth bass density increased 4 fold over last years'. Numbers of fish over 15 inches are abundant, with good year classes of smaller fish coming into the fishery. Smallmouth bass remain at normal densities, although the numbers of keeper fish has decreased. Smallmouth over 18 inches, though, were at the highest recorded abundance in the >90's. Spotted bass are also present in the reservoir, but at reduced densities relative to the other black bass species. As a group, these bass species will provide quality angling throughout the year, along with an occasional trophy smallmouth. (15 in. length limit)